

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07

OMB-01 COME-00 TRSE-00 EUR-12 /075 W

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R 190816Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9585

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 1287

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CB, BM

SUBJECT: LOCAL REACTION TO MAYAGUEZ AFFAIR

1. AS EXPECTED, THE GUB HAS TAKEN NO PUBLIC POSITION ON THE SEIZURE OF THE MAYAGUEZ BY THE CAMBODIANS OR ITS RECOVERY BY US FORCES, IS TREATING IT AS A MATTER BETWEEN THE PARTIES INVOLVED AND OF NO DIRECT CONCERN TO BURMA. (INTERNATIONAL WIRE SERVICE COVERAGE OF THE INCIDENT IN THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO COMMENTARY.) PRIVATELY, HOWEVER, GUB OFFICIALS HAVE HEARTILY ENDORSED THE US REACTION. ONE MFA OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF THE INCIDENT WAS NOT UNDER CONSIDERATION WITHIN HIS MINISTRY BUT ADDED WITH A WINK "UNOFFICIALLY", THE US DID A GREAT JOB; KEEP IT UP."

2. SIMILAR EXPRESSIONS OF ENDORSEMENT FOR THE US MILITARY OPERATION AND ADMIRATION FOR THE PRECISION WITH WHICH IT WAS CARRIED OUT HAVE BEEN VIRTUALLY UNIVERSAL FROM MANY SOURCES BOTH IN AND OUT OF THE GOVERNMENT. BURMESE MILITARY OFFICERS, WHILE NOT COMMENTING ON THE MERITS OF THE CAMBODIAN OR US CLAIMS ABOUT THE SHIP SEIZURE, HAVE INDICATED ADMIRATION FOR THE MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM DISPLAYED. THAI PROTESTS ABOUT THE USE OF US
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BASES THERE TO CONDUCT THE OPERATION HAVE SPARKED NO PARTICULAR

SYMPATHY; IN GENERAL, WHAT IRRITATES THE THAI TENDS TO PLEASE THE BURMESE.

3. WITHIN THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, COMMENT HAS BEEN GENERALLY SYMPATHETIC TO THE US POSITION WITH THE EXCEPTION, OF COURSE, OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF COMMUNIST STATES. WESTERN EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS FEEL THAT THE US ACTION WAS UNAVOIDABLE GIVEN THE MYSTERIOUS AND APPARENTLY IRRATIONAL TEMPER OF THE NEW CAMBODIAN AUTHORITIES. EVEN A PRC EMBASSY OFFICIAL COMMENTED TO A FRENCH DIPLOMAT THAT HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE CAMBODIAN'S MOTIVE FOR SEIZING THE MAYAGUEZ IN THE FIRST PLACE. AND, IN A LENGTHY TOUR D'HORIZON WITH THE FRG CHARGENDAY 16, PRC EMBASSY OFFICIALS NEVER MENTIONED THE INCIDENT.

4. IN SUMMARY, THE OUTCOME OF THE MAYAGUEZ AFFAIR PROBABLY STRENGTHENED THE STANDING OF THE US IN THE MINDS OF THE BURMESE, EXPECIALLY IN THE WAKE OF THE FALL OF VIET-NAM AND CAMBODIA. WHILE THE GUB WANTS NO INTERVENTION BY THE MAJOR WORLD POWERS IN ITS AFFAIRS, NEITHER DOES IT WELCOME THE COLLAPSE OF US WILL OR INTEREST IN THE REGION AND THE LOSS OF ANY COUNTERBALANCE TO THE SOVIET AND CHINESE PRESENCE.

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
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